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PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY

28 Ap 05

(Freeman)
NBI

Themes in Verse

by

James E. Freeman,

Rector of

St. Andrew's Memorial Church,

Yonkers, N. Y.

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1905

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James E. Freeman.

Dedicated to those women who minister to the needs of the Chancel in St. Andrew's Memorial Church, Yonkers, N. Y.

These few fragmentary poems and hymns, have their chief value in the themes that inspired them. Life is full of music and poetry, and for every discord there are a hundred harmonies, if we will but bend our ear to hear them. If we are in tune with the Infinite, we must catch now and again the music of the spheres, and feel the pulsings of that Life that never utters itself, except in tones that vibrate with harmony.

ST. ANDREW'S RECTORY,
December, 1904.

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The Higher Life

TO seek for music, not for soul-less sound,
To feel the pulsings of a higher life,
To bring the tuneful harmonies of Heav'n
Where men are struggling with their daily strife:
Ah, this is but to live so close to God
That ev'ry breath drinks in the purer air;
To body forth the message that bespeaks
Of life enfolded in the Father's care.

If we are tired with the day's hard battle,
And feel the awful dullness that doth brood
Where clashing discords render life uneven,
Then let us seek for still diviner food.
But let us strive not for our selfish using,
Else shall we fail to reach that bounteous store;
For he who lives for selfish ends must wander
Where strife and discord dwell forevermore.

God gives us life, not for the mere consuming
Of passions that lay waste the better self;
Nor yet to get and have the things that perish,
To gather thus, were little less than pelf.
There is no gold that selfish use doth brighten,
There is no service worthy of the name,
But in its seeking looks to things of others,
Who liveth thus will reach the holier fame.

What shall we for His highest favor barter?
Can gifts of men compare with His "Well done?"
Why, life is but the fleeting of a shadow,
The hour-glass sands are very swiftly run.
To live to-day as those who live to-morrow,
To see the beckoning hand that bids us on,
And then to rise and hasten ever forward
Until at length we reach our latest sun.

The golden glow that comes before the darkness
Gives promise of a fairer day unborn;
The evening star that twinkles in the twilight
Is like some prophet of a newer morn.
No deepening shadows greet the weary pilgrim
Whose face is set towards the brightening light;
For such there is no fear about to-morrow, —
It dawns resplendent with the passing night.

November 8th, 1904.

The Boy Divine

IN the Temple court, midst the doctors great,
With their scrolls of Prophet and Sage,
With His face aglow with a light divine,
As unfolding the page with its deep design,
Stands the Boy of a far-off age.

His words fall fast on the teachers' ears
As He plies them with questions each,
And the straining eyes of Rabbis start
As they feel the glow of His deeper thought,
And the import of His speech.

The Boy of Nazareth deals with a theme
As old as the mountains hoary,
But its mystery deep and its truth sublime
Has its meaning revealed by the Master of Time,
As He tells the wondrous story.

In Herod's Temple there stood that day,
Unknown to people or priest,
The Christ of promise, of Prophecy's page,
The Christ foretold by some distant sage;
Of its worshippers, He was least.

But there dawned on His vision, divinely clear,
A destiny fraught with strife,
A destiny linked with issues vast,
As far in the future as into the past
He beholds the ransomed life.

What brooks He now a mother's call,
  Or a father's importunate speech?
He is bound to a cause so great and high
That it mounts from earth to a starry sky,
  That only a God may reach.

"Wist ye not? Wist ye not? A Father's cause
  Has challenged my deepest desire:
His business august demands His Son,
For Heav'n and Earth must be joined in one,
  To unite them we both conspire."

To the distant shores of a time remote,
  'Till Eternity's day is born,
As a Herald of Peace and of light sublime,
We hail Him as ours out of every clime,
  While we eagerly wait the morn.

"After three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And when they saw Him, they were amazed: and His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

St. Luke 2:46, 48 and 49.

The Good Shepherd

"I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

THE gentle Shepherd with staff in hand
Has left the fold for the wild:
He is satisfied not with the ninety and nine,
He must seek His wandering child.

The night is drear on the mountain steep,
The winds in the tree-tops moan,
And the thickets abound with nettles sharp,
But he presses on for His own.

The voice of the Shepherd is calling now,
It is calling loud and clear:
"I am coming, my wandering child, to thee;
Be brave, dear one, I am near."

No lowering night, nor dashing storm
Can stay the Shepherd's flight:
He will find the lost one tho' wandered far;
No gloom can blind His sight.

With listening ear He pauses now
To catch the faintest sigh;
Though sin and hell may clamor loud
He will hear the lost one's cry.

In the darkest hour when faith is low,
  The hour before the morn,
He finds His child by sin ensnared,
  Tired, and weak, and forlorn.

The Shepherd's lip no censure speaks,
  As He stoops with outstretched hand,
Only to break the bands of sin
  And to make the fallen stand.

'Tis the lesson of life the Shepherd gives,
  To a world that is cold and stern;
A lesson of love and forgiveness true,
  And one that we all must learn.

No child of His so stained with sin,
  No sheep that has wandered afar,
But can find the fold and the Shepherd, too,
  When love will the gates unbar.

Visions and Tasks

"While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee." Acts 10:19.

ALONE, upon the housetop, Peter dreams;
A vision fair enthralls his wrapt attention;
But yonder comes a band of simple men,
To rouse him to their needs, is their intention.

This zealot Jew no race of men embraces;
His creed is stiff, no single jot relenting;
But lo, — Cornelius calls him from his dream
To tell the story of his deep repenting.

Arise thou! Peter, go, and nothing doubting;
All men are sons of mine, thou narrow teacher.
To earth's wide bounds, in every clime and place,
I hold as brethren all, earth's every creature.

The vision and the dream are preparation
For life's hard tasks, its struggles and its sorrow.
To-day I look into the face of God;
This gives me heart to do life's work to-morrow.

The Holy City

"I, John, Saw the Holy City."

IN the glory of that vision
Seen by John on Patmos Isle,
While the veil of mystery parted
And revealed God's heaven awhile,
Majesty too grand and awful
Wrapt his thought with wonders bright,
As the great Eternal City
Rose in glory on his sight.

'Twas a city high uplifted
Standing there 'twixt sky and earth,
While its walls with jewels sparkled,
Naught was there to speak of dearth;
Gates of pearl and streets all golden
Flashed beneath a burning sun;
There no night can ever lower,
Days their course can never run.

Nothing there those gates may enter,
Guarded by a shining band,
Saving those whose Sovereign holy
Beckons them with piercèd hand.
'Tis His city where He reigneth,
Where the rule of life is love;
'Tis the haven of His children
Coming down from God above.

In its streets of homes resplendent,
  Where reunions come at length,
Where the tired pilgrim halteth,
  Lives again in glowing strength,
Life flows on with joy unceasing;
  Sorrow banished, flown its cares,
Death forevermore is exiled;
  Sin no more can weave its snares.

As the seer on Patmos lingered,
  Came an agel clothed in white;
With a golden reed he measured
  City walls, and took their height.
And the length and breadth were equal,
  Nothing marred proportions bold
Of that city high exalted,
  With its streets of purest gold.

Lacked there yet one thing he sought for,
  Penetrating vistas long,
'Twas the temple dome of beauty
  Strengthened by its buttress strong.
There he saw no glistening marble
  Decked with gold, or towers high,
Lifting up their snowy summits,
  Kissing now the evening sky.

Thus with stylus he inscribeth
On the page of sacred lore:
"There I saw no temple standing —
Love is there forevermore."
Over all the city reigneth
Peace and righteousness supreme;
Every lip one story telleth:
Christ, the Lamb, — the one grand theme.

The First Easter Morn

AT early morn, on the first Easter day,
While the world slept on in its dull decay,
Came the two Marys, with spices and balm,
To anoint their Lord in the morning calm.

As they hurried along they softly said,
Thinking the while of their sacred dead,
"What of the stone which the watchers bold
Against the mouth of the tomb have rolled?"

No one may enter the rock-hewn grave,
For a Roman guard is there to save
From the hands of those who would bear Him away,
The Lord whom they slew on that awful day.

Nearer they drew to the garden's shade,
Where He whom they loved had been tenderly laid;
When lo, they were stricken with fear and fright
By an angel guard all clothed in white.

"What seek ye here?" the angels said;
"Why seek ye the living among the dead?
For He is not here, but has gone away
To the realms of light and perpetual day."

Mary, the Magdalene, bolder than other,
Even than she whom He called His mother,
Lingered awhile, though she wept and prayed,
To learn from the angel where else He was laid.

Not to her sore and wondering vision
Came the bright light of her Savior risen.
Not till His lips had said "Mary," — then faster
Came her response of "Rabboni — Master."

"Touch me not yet," said Christ to the Magdalene;
"Tell my disciples I go on before them." Then
Out from her vision He vanished away
On the early morn of that first Easter day.

Written March 26th, 1902, for St. Andrew's Sunday School.

The Ascension

IN silent majesty He trod,
This matchless Man — this Son of God.
His mission here has reached its end;
Above Him hosts angelic bend.

The worlds of light fling wide their gates;
His sceptre rules eternal States.
The victor's crown is on his brow;
Angels and men His subjects now.

No more He wears the robes of earth,
No longer feels its pain and dearth;
The riches of His Father's throne
He claims forever as His own.

And while the listening seraphs bend
To catch the words that life portend,
He lifts His pierced hands in prayer,
And breathes His benediction rare.

"My peace I give, O Sons of earth,
The peace that passeth human worth;
Take it to bounds of earth unknown,
And bring my children to my throne.

"Go forth to men, make known my love;
Tell them of realms of light above, —
Baptize, and bless them in My name;
Upon all Kingdoms lay My claim.

"Lo — I am with you always." Light
Enfolded, caught Him from their sight.
The Christ of men rose to His throne;
The Christ of God has claimed His own.

Ascensiontide, 1902.

Life's Purpose

NOTE — Suggested by the text: "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do."

THE issues of our life and thought
We measure with some standard poor;
Our deeds are done as if they wrought
But for the space of time — no more —
And then we die.

Each day of life, like some new page
Is filled with much of commonplace;
No royal road is for our feet;
We seem too weak to run the race —
Too weak to try.

All life that's lived for self is weak;
The man that strives but for his own
Must come at length to lose the prize,
To miss the goal, to fail the crown —
And find defeat.

The King that wields the sceptre strong,
The soldier with his blade of steel,
The peasant at his simpler tasks, —
All these shall fail at last, and reel
Before the grave.

There must be something still to do
  To make this life more splendid yet,
To live as if its mission here
  Were to do good, and not forget
    Its purpose true.

What if it be the common lot
  Of ours to tread the lower vales,
Nor on the mountain heights to walk,
  But sing until the daylight pales,
    And then to sleep?

What was it in the Nazarene
  That made His life, so shortly spun,
The miracle of life 'mongst men,
  And crowned it with — "Well done! Well done!"
    When He was slain?

"The work thou gavest me to do
  Is finished." Thus I hear Him cry;
And then upon an outstretched cross,
  The cruel cross, I see Him die,
    But not to fail.

His life compared with other men
  Who wrote their names against the sky
Is different in its lasting power;
  While theirs are gone, His cannot die; —
    Too mighty 'tis.

His life was lived not for itself,
  But for the world thro' which He moved
" In doing good," the writer saith;
  In doing good for all who loved
      His presence most.

'Tis selfishness that dies, not love:
  'Tis living with a love for those
For whom He lived and died, and then
  For whom in majesty He rose
      To die no more.

If I would learn life's best decree,
  And stand with Him, its work well done,
His footsteps ever must I trace,
  And bear my cross, and win my crown —
      To wear for aye.

A Meditation

The following lines were suggested by the singularly beautiful collect for the 4th Sunday after Easter.

"O, Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men: Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

I SAT me down at eventide
In the quiet of my home,
And I asked myself the question,
"What of the years to come?"

I was eager to lift the veil then
That hid the great unknown,
But a voice within me answered,
"Thou shalt reap as thou hast sown."

I was full of my life's ambition,
Of a world that before me lay:
I had hopes of a larger service,
And sighed for a brighter day.

But while I sat thus musing,
Full of my life's forecast,
I beheld in the mirror of memory
My life as it was in the past.

Over my vision stealing
  Came the thoughts of my yesterdays,
And I saw the shadows of mis-spent years
  Stalk through the evening maze.

I recalled the hopes of my boyhood,
  The dreams of my fond delight,
Hopes that had never been realized,
  Dreams that had passed in the night;

The faith of my early manhood,
  The Christ of my opening life,
How my thoughts have changed in these later
    days,
  These days of struggle and strife;

The habits so sweet and sacred,
  When I trod the solemn aisle
By the side of my sainted mother,
  And felt the peace of her smile, —

Ah, those were the days of glory,
  When the sun with his beams of gold
Shed about my life a lustre
  That I thought could ne'er grow old.

But the spell of my joy was broken,
  The hand that I clasped was still,
And I felt a new world about me, —
  'Twas a world that was dark and chill.

New forces now came into being,
  New passions were pressing me sore,
And I turned my face to the future,
  For the past could hold me no more.

The world with its gold and glitter,
  Life with its quickening speed,
Was like some mighty vortex:
  To be great was my only heed.

The habits I used to practice,
  The Sabbaths I loved of old, —
Why, what of my life's desires then?
  The fires have now grown cold;

The aisles of the church forgotten,
  Her sacraments richly blest,
These, too, I have left behind me,
  Behind me with all the rest.

Has life lost all its meaning?
  Is there naught in the world can hold
The love of my better manhood
  Besides the cankering gold?

Am I living my years of service
  To catch the world's applause?
Is there nothing higher to lead me
  On to a better cause?

And I roused me from my stupor,
I rose as the shadows hung,
Like some drapery in the heavens,
Where the stars of night were flung;

And I yearned again for my vision,
My vision of yesterday,
And I cried to the Christ above me
That He would with me stay.

'Twas the same old story I longed for,
The same true life of the past,
And away from my cares and troubles
I prayed Him to hold me fast.

The world with its tinsel and splendor
I would yield for one long look
Into the days of my boyhood,
With its sealed and forgotten book.

It is not what we need for the present,
Nor what we have made in the past,
That can bring us the joy of His comfort
And the peace that must ever last.

I have found in my evening musing
The solvent of all my fears,
And like a baptism of penitence
My cheeks are bathed with my tears.

No more will I ask the question,
"What of the years to come?"
For when the last curtain falleth
I know He will bring me home.

"Yet There Is Room"

THERE is room in the church for men of all creeds,
If we follow the Master's life.
We haven't the time to be splitting of hairs,
And we've certainly less for strife.

The church that is bound by traditions so fast
That it never looks over its wall,
Nor holds fellowship strong with all classes of men,
Is surely not Christ's church at all.

In His noble conception of faith among men
He extended its boundaries wide,
So inclusive it was in its world-sweeping scope
That no mortal should e'er be denied.

To withhold from His children its joy and its peace,
To limit its work to its creeds,
Is to part with its Master whose teaching it was,
To make it conform to man's needs.

We live in an age that far outstrips the past,
With Mercury feet we have run;
In all the advance that is witnessed on earth,
Can the church in her course be outdone?

While we love her traditions, we venerate more
Her Exemplar in faith and in deeds,
For all classes, all peoples, the rich and the poor,
Is the cause which the Saviour still pleads.

To interpret His spirit, to make known His word,
To usher in peace and love,
Until this old world with its struggle and strife
Is like to His kingdom above.

In her charity broad, in her works grand and true,
Her gates stand wide open for all,
"There is room, there is room, let them come, let
them come," —
Are the words of His welcoming call.

Sorrow's Meaning

I STAND beneath the cloud of mystery,
Enrapt in folds of ever deepening night,
The last faint trailing star of promise faded,
I grope in darkness and I cry for light.

No answering voice, no ray of hope before me,
The hand now pulseless beckons me no more;
"Oh! God," I cry, "is this the end of living?
Can nothing soothe this heart of mine so sore?"

Oh! speak to me, one word of comfort utter;
Tell me that life unending crowns our days;
Part but the curtain for a single moment;
My soul in anguish on Thy promise stays.

The cloud is lifting; lo! I see the morning;
Can this be fancy? Do I longer dream?
Across the shadows of my gloom now stealing,
The rays of promise on my vision gleam.

A voice now speaks; it is the Master's, — hearken!
"Behold, once dead, I live for evermore;
The life thou lovest now is in my keeping,
Enjoys my heaven with all its endless store.

"Live on, nor let thy faith and hope e'er falter;
Live as becometh one whose hope secure
Has now a golden link that binds him closer
Unto my throne. Fight on! Faint not! Endure!"

I brush'd away the tears that hid my vision;
I knelt in prayer beside my sacred dead;
No longer did I feel the hopeless sorrow,
Upon my fears a radiant light was shed.

After the night there came the glowing sunlight,
After the storm, the bow of promise fair;
This is not death, 'tis life, 'tis life eternal;
I too shall live and love forever there.

The mystery of sorrow hath its meaning;
To live as hopeless is not meant to be,
We yield our loved ones unto Thine own keeping,
No harm can touch them, they are safe with Thee.

Trinity, 1902.

An Easter Reverie

AT the sunset when the day is paling,
And the stars are twinkling in the west,
Saw you never in the darkness falling
Something that foretold the coming rest?

As the last faint trailing clouds of glory
Cast their lingering shadows on the height,
Thought you not of the Eternal City
Over which there were no clouds of night?

When the lamps of God above were swinging
Through their orbits bright, a fiery train,
Did there not upon your vision stealing
Spring the majesty of His eternal fane?

Of a temple, lifted up, and fairer
Than the noblest temple made with hands,
And you sighed to see within its portals
Where the King of Glory ever stands.

There the stars of light will fade forever;
There the sun no need to shine alway,
For within His mansions there will ever
Stand the burning light of endless day.

There He reigns whose human life exalted
Rose above the thraldom of the grave;
As He lives, so we shall live in triumph,
For He died and rose again to save.

From a grave of self, and sin, and sorrow,
Must you rise again, forever free,
And beyond to-morrow and to-morrow
Sing His praise through all eternity.

Into this unfading glory, splendor,
May you come to that far distant shore,
And united with your loved and lost ones
Dwell with Him in peace for evermore.

Easter, 1902.

Life's Renewal

THE world at Christmas-tide renews
The fountain of its youth;
And feels the stirrings of the Christ,
Whose wondrous name is Truth.

At childhood's shrine the dullest pulse
Is quickened with new power;
Old age forgets its halting gait,
Nor heeds the passing hour.

To Bethlehem all feet are bent,
To see the babe new born;
For God through childhood came to earth
On that first Christmas morn.

No quest of Holy Grail was e'er
More splendid made than when
The sons of earth, in humble faith,
Turn to the Christ again.

No ancient Rome in fairest hour,
Nor Athens, Queen of Greece,
Outranks Judea's simple Town
Whose fame must still increase.

No system that the world holds dear,
No moulder of its thought,
Compares with what revealed in Him
The ancient Magi sought.

The fount of youth, the spring of age,
We seek it year by year;
As pilgrims out of every land,
We come from far and near.

Beside the mother and her child
The world in wonder waits;
Until at length it stands renewed
Before the heavenly gates.

November 30th, 1904.

Myrtle Hill

The following verses were suggested by a long and well constructed line of earthworks, stretching for a mile along the edge of a thick pine wood, which at Fayetteville, North Carolina, still witnesses to that awful period, when brother fought against brother in our great Civil War. The Confederate Army anticipated that Sherman on his march to the sea would pass over this highway, but the clever master of this great host of footsore soldiers deflected his line of march from the main road just before entering Fayetteville, thus foiling the design of his enemies and frustrating their carefully and well-executed plans.

DOWN amid the pines and laurels,
Where all Nature's hushed and still,
Down beside the Cape Fear River,
Is a spot called Myrtle Hill.

Nature's gifts, so rich and beauteous,
Scattered here on every hand,
Gentle airs so soft and balmy
Make of this the fairest land.

Rivulets dance their wayward dances,
Cascades leap and take their flight,
Down amid the ferns and grasses
Wild flowers weave their patterns bright.

On the hilltop near the homestead,
Once, in years now passed away,
Skirting there the long green forests,
Stood an army clad in gray.

Here they waited long and boldly,
While they threw their earthworks high,
Looking for a mighty army
Ever hastening to draw nigh.

Sherman, with his tired legions,
Moving onward to the coast,
Here must meet a worthy foeman,
Thought this well-embattled host.

Down behind their long-drawn earthworks
Waited they, and waited still,
Listening for the signal sounding
On the hilltop, loud and shrill.

But the signal never sounded,
And their waiting was in vain,
For the sturdy Northern chieftain
Moved in silence 'cross the plain.

Over rivers, bridgeless, marched he,
Led his men across the lea,
Moving ever eastward, onward,
In his journey to the sea.

While a Southern army waited,
  Waited still on Robert Lee,
On this trailing host was marching
  In its journey to the sea.

Not from over yon long earthworks
  Came a shot to stay his course,
Not from rifle-pit or hilltop
  Heard was there the cannon hoarse.

Here's a battlefield that's stainless;
  Not a drop of human blood
Shed was there upon the breastworks
  Where the men in gray have stood.

Now to-day this silent witness,
  Like some record strong and fast,
Tells again its hopeless story
  Of the dead and buried past.

Once again the wild flowers linger
  On these still and sullen walls,
And across from North to Southland
  No dread war-cloud's shadow falls.

Woven like the grasses yonder,
  In a compact strong and true,
Naught again can ever sever
  Men in gray and men in blue.

Myrtle Hill, 1902.

My Boy

HERE he comes, with his golden hair,
My little blue-eyed son;
He's tired now with the day's long play;
His hours have swiftly run.

Kneeling beside me, with soul so pure,
He lisps his evening prayer;
With hands clasped tight and face uplift
He seeks the Father's care.

His life is like an urn of gold,
With incense burning pure;
No prayer of priest in vestments white
E'er reached the throne more sure.

The prayer is done, with arms outstretched
He rises for his kiss,
And for an instant lingering yet
I feel the spell of bliss.

"Good night, my tired little man,
May angels ever be
About thy life in all its ways
When I am far from thee."

As years roll on, and life unfolds
Its sorrow and its joy,
May He whose Son once trod this earth
Protect my darling boy.

Baptism of a Child

THE crystal drops describe a cross
Upon thy forehead fair,
The symbol of our blessed Lord, —
May thou His favor share.

Named for thy mother, precious child,
God give thee all of grace,
Until at length, thy life well lived,
Thou see Him face to face.

'Tis Elinor we christen thee,
A name more sweet than others;
No fairer, prouder name, I ween,
Because it was thy mother's.

As spotless as the waters clear,
As bright as sunbeam's glow;
Across the hidden path of years
May flowers of fragrance grow.

A Reverie of Christmas Eve

THE night is cold, the wintry winds
Are blowing harsh and shrill;
The snow, a mantle, pure and white,
Is covering vale and hill.

The embers warm reflect their light
Upon the bright hearth's stone;
'Tis Christmas eve, and the children now
Have left me quite alone.

Their stockings, hung by the mantleshelf,
Cast shadows long and weird;
In their dreams they see their Santa Claus,
With his long and silvery beard.

They hear the jingle of the bells
Of the reindeer fleet and true;
A smile lights up each sleeping face;
I seem to hear them, too.

Ah! what a precious dream is this,
That fills their souls with joy;
What would I give for all their hopes
So free from the world's alloy!

These visions that the children share
Are the truest and the best;
No dullness wears their keen delight;
They know no faltering zest.

Their peaceful sleep no storms alarm,
  Though winds may roar and roll;
They only hear the music sweet,
  The music of the soul.

The childhood's dream is better far
  Than the visions of after life;
For theirs is freed from the world's alarm,
  While mine is full of strife.

'Tis this, I think, that the Master meant,
  When He said of the children then:
Except like them ye live and love
  Ye shall never be true men.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto them;
  Its streets of resplendent gold
Are pressed by the feet of a multitude
  Whose love has ne'er grown cold.

Good Master, the Child of this Season bright,
  Come into my life anew,
And for all that tells of a care-worn heart,
  Oh, give me the good and true.

A Christmas Burial

THE world all about us was bright with a season
That spake once again of the Master's birth,
As we stood by a grave that was sacred and holy
And committed our loved one, — "earth unto earth."

'Twas a life that had glowed with the fulness of being,
That had lived out its span, yet was youthful and bright;
As the sun at its setting reflects back its glory,
So here there was something that told us of light.

The cool whispering breezes that sighed thro' the woodland
Seemed singing a requiem, tender and low;
And the dead, fallen leaves that were shorn of their beauty
Still told of a Season now past long ago.

No birds on the branches were twittering their story,
The streams bound in ice had no message to tell,
And yet there was borne to the soul of our being
The whisper of peace, — "All is well; All is well."

Mother Earth in her kindness embosoms him
gently;
'Tis the lot of all mortals her shelter to share;
Here the mantle is dropped over failure and
weakness,
And the world is shut out, with its cold, sullen
stare.

From man unto God, from Earth unto Heaven,
The one supreme Master is Christ and His
love.
Our mound is an Altar; our sacrifice rendered,
The best that we have: — take it, Lord, from
above.

Flowers of Service

The following lines were suggested by an incident of peculiar beauty in connection with the passing away of a dear friend. On the afternoon of her death, the last act of her life was to gather a basket of flowers for an expected friend.

Leaving the flowers upon the lawn in the basket in which she had gathered them, she stepped upon the porch of her home and within a few moments had passed into the land of perpetual summer.

The flowers were found as she had left them and were subsequently placed beside her, the mute token of her loving service.

'TIS only a basket of flowers sweet,
True messengers these of love;
Yet their fragrant lips a story keeps
Of one who loved them, but tenderly sleeps
Where the flowers blossom above.

She plucked these blossoms a friend to greet,
An off'ring of love was this;
But an Angel in flight for a moment bent
And whispered a word from the Master sent —
'Twas the breath of an Angel's kiss.

A chalice of beauty each fragrant flow'r,
Filled up to the brim with love;
For each bud is rich with her latest power:
'Tis touched with the glow of her sunset hour
Ere the summons comes from above.

The basket of flowers still idly waits,
And the blossoms are fading there;
But their mistress lives in a fairer land,
Where the children of God shall forever stand
And the heart is freed from all care.

The flowers of service beside her laid
Are whispering words of peace,
But the garland we twine must fade away
While her Master weaves one that lasts for aye,
The symbol of life's release.

Hymns

Music for the Hymns has been written by

Stanley R. Avery,

Choirmaster at St. Andrew's Memorial Church

A Christmas Carol

THIS is the night of the Savior's birth,
And the stars are twinkling bright;
The shepherds with wondering eyes behold
The angels in their flight.
The sound of minstrelsy is heard,
As the harpers with chorus clear
Strike out their wondrous melody,
And tell that the Christ is here.

Refrain.

Ring on, ring on, ye Christmas bells
Till the light of morning breaks,
And the world from out its weariness
To a newer life awakes.

Peace on Earth, good will to men, they sing,
And strike their harps of gold;
And the shepherds on bended knee in prayer
Are stirred by their message bold.
The waiting Magi, with gifts most rare,
Have come from their distant land
To greet the Child of Mary born
In the place where the oxen stand.

'Tis lowly, this home of the Savior dear;
No regal place is this;
But a light divine fills all the room,
The light of a holy bliss.
The gold and the frankincense and myrrh
Are the symbols of worship true;
But the aged Magi are seeking here
The fount of life to renew.

So the world to Bethlehem comes again
To receive from the Savior's hand
The gift of life, complete and full; —
Behold the Christ child stand!
He gives to the world its highest joy,
Unbars the gates of gold,
And for a life of fleeting years
Gives one that ne'er grows old.

November 8th, 1904.

A Christmas Song

OH, season of the Christmas Child,
We hail thee with delight;
The star that shone o'er Bethlehem
Is mistress of the night.
The waiting shepherds heard the song:
"Good will and peace on earth;"
The world itself was hushed and still
To greet the Savior's birth.

Refrain.

"Good will and peace," the angels sang,
And struck their harps of gold;
The Christ of Bethlehem is here,
By prophets long foretold.

Across the plains in silence deep
There moved an anxious band;
The star that shines above them bright
Is like a beckoning hand.
These wise men came from out the East,
With gifts both rich and rare;
Before the manger, bending low,
They seek His love to share.

A light within the stable burns,
And from His blessed face
A peace divine, shed over all,
Makes radiant the place.
The gentle Mary, mother sweet,
Beholds His slumber mild,
While Joseph in his strong embrace
Enfolds the Holy Child.

Oh, night divine with holiness,
The world is waiting still
To catch the beauty of that Life
And do His sovereign will.
Before His humble manger bed
We bow where shepherds trod;
Give us to see Him face to face,
The blessed Son of God.

The Easter Bells

RINGING to-day are the Easter bells
Their message, loud and clear;
'Tis a message of hope and a message of life,
And one that we love to hear.
The Christmas bells have a music sweet;
They tell of a babe new born;
But the Easter bells have a different tone
On the resurrection morn.

The solemn bells on Calvary's height
Fall heavy and harsh and stern;
But three short days, the dirge is o'er;
Their lesson the world must learn.
Ring out, sweet bells of the Easter morn,
Ring out your message true;
We sing the song of our risen Lord;
'Tis a message ever new.

All hail! Thou risen Son of God,
On this glad Easter day;
The tomb that once was tenanted
No longer holds its prey.
A Roman guard hath lost its power,
Is startled with dismay,
For lo! an angel band in white
Hath rolled the stone away.

Easter, 1904.

Aspiration

TO Thee, my Father and my God,
I lift my voice in praise;
Enthroned in power and majesty,
Thou compassest my days.

When morning light with beams of gold
Adorns the eastern sky,
I see Thee in the radiant sun,
The lamp of God on high.

In childhood's morn or youth's bright noon,
At setting sun or night,
I find Thee ever at my side;
Thou art unfailing light.

No issues vast or sorrows deep
Can hide Thee from mine eyes;
In humblest adoration, Lord,
I rise to seize the prize.

Oh, let me be like unto Thee,
My Savior and my King;
Exalt and bring me nearer Thee —
Thy praises still I sing.

When life is o'er, and time and sense
Have spent their latest day,
In Thee my soul shall find its all,
With Thee I'll live for aye.

Communion Hymn

WITH glad and grateful heart, O God,
Thy temple courts I tread;
From things that rob me of Thyself
I come to seek Thy bread.

Oh, feed me with this food divine;
My famished soul restore;
The consecrated elements,
I love them more and more.

Renew the springs of peace and joy;
Give power to live the life
Of Him who by His sacrifice
Has armed us for the strife.

Before Thy Altar, Son of God,
With contrite heart I bow;
Increase my strength, inflame my zeal,
Accept my solemn vow.

Sorrento, Me., August, 1904.

Calvary

OF all the stories the world holds dear,
There is none so ineffably sweet,
As that of the cross on Calvary drear,
Where sorrow and glory meet.

Refrain.

Then sing of His love, and sing of His might,
Till the stars of heav'n are cold;
For He dwells in the height of undying light,
With His crown of resplendent gold.

The cross of Christ, with its Kingly Lord,
Is the magnet of all the Earth:
'Tis the boast of the hero, the song of the bard,
And its value of priceless worth.

The pilgrims come from far and near
To hear Him speak from His throne:
"It is finished," He cries in accents clear,
And the world responds, "Well done."

No hero of earth ever died so brave
As the Christ on Calvary's tree;
For He lived for men and He died to save,
From the grave to make men free.

Anniversary

ALLELUIA, Alleluia, praise and power be unto Thee;
Alleluia, Alleluia, honor, glory, majesty.
Throned on high in splendor reigning,
Men and powers on earth ordaining,
Father, Son and Spirit, Blessed Trinity.

Alleluia, Alleluia, angels bow before Thy face;
Alleluia, Alleluia, low before the Throne of Grace;
Saints and martyrs, spirits bending,
Sing to Thee their praise unending;
Great and endless glory fills the sacred place.

Alleluia, Alleluia, we have caught the triumph song;
Alleluia, Alleluia, with the ever-blessed throng;
Here we tell of grace abounding,
Grace of Him whose praise resounding
Makes us worthy, true, and mighty as the strong.

Alleluia, Alleluia, arm us with the Spirit's power;
Alleluia, Alleluia, grant to us the blessed dower;
Here we pledge our best endeavor,
Guard us now and guard us ever,
Leave us never in temptation's awful hour.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Father, Son and Spirit blest;
Alleluia, Alleluia, answer Thou the earnest quest;
Give us visions of Thy glory,
Speak to us the wondrous story,
Lead us on our way until we win our rest.

Devotion

THE choicest spot on earth is where
The soul communes with God in prayer;
Within its portals, Lord, we bow
And make anew our solemn vow.

Here life takes on its new desire,
And feels the consecrating fire;
Ennobling powers within me spring
To greet my Master and my King.

Here friendship's quickening powers I feel,
And hearts are linked with hoops of steel;
These fellowships are born of Thee,
And stand through all eternity.

God of my life, to Thee I raise
This humble prayer, this hymn of praise;
To Thee I yield my life, my all,
And rise obedient at Thy call.

Lord, keep me through this troublous life,
And save me from its storm and strife,
Until at length its race is run —
Thy gracious lips shall say, WELL DONE.

The Church

THY temple, Lord, I love,
With passionate desire;
It is the place where altars burn
Their sacrificial fire.

Here at this sacred shrine,
We meet as pilgrims true;
We come to Thee, O God, to Thee —
Our pledge of faith renew.

The memories here are rich
With choicest friendships blest;
We linger still to sing Thy praise;
The saints have won their rest.

Thy sweet communion, Lord,
We hold with chastened hearts;
We seem to feel within its power
The glory it imparts.

Fellowship

A PILGRIM band, we journey on our way,
With scars that tell of battles we have fought;
Our hope is in the Everlasting Arms,
Our peace we find within Thy temple's court.

The ills of life, its sorrows and its care,
Are known to Thee, Thou God of love and might;
We are but children, on Thine arm we lean;
We are but children crying in the night.

Here at Thine altars, Lord, we bend in prayer;
To Thee we lift the anthem of our praise;
What homage may we render unto Thee
Whose majesty encompasseth our days?

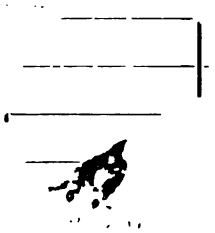
No strength of ours can arm us for the fight;
On Thee alone we lean; Thine arm is strong;
Attune our hearts with Thine, O God of Love,
And teach our lips to sing the triumph song.

Trinity Hymn

HOLY, Holy, Holy: Father, Spirit, Son:
Trinity of persons, ever three in one.
Glorious manifesting of divinest power,
With enlightened vision fill this sacred hour.

Holy, Holy, Holy: In the days of old
To the prophets' vision Thou didst then unfold
Messages of splendor, messages of peace,
Hintings of a lifehood that should never cease.

Holy, Holy, Holy: Son of God most high:
Thou in all Thy Manhood taught us God was nigh,
Told us of His power, told us of His might,
Drew aside the curtain, ushered in the light.

Holy, Holy, Holy: Pentecostal Flame,
Blessed Holy Spirit, Godhead's latest name;
Teacher, Guide, Inspirer: lead us on our way,
Out of death and darkness into realms of day.

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